

# THE TESSELLATE INSTITUTE



## 2011 ANNUAL REPORT



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June 2011 saw the launch of TTI's first research paper, "Canadian Muslim Youth and Political Participation: A Willingness to Engage." Funded by the Olive Tree Foundation, and co-sponsored with MENTORS, Drs Katherine Bullock and Paul Nesbitt-Larking (Chair, Dept of Political Science, Huron University College in London) were the project researchers and report writers. The project sought to understand how young Muslims were interacting with Canada's political system. We conducted in-depth interviews with 20 Muslim youth, aged fifteen to twenty-four, male and female, in the GTA and London, Ontario. One of our most important research findings was that the Muslim youth are highly engaged in volunteering in their local communities, and are open to being more involved in the political process, with a few highly involved in either informal or formal politics. See the website for a pdf version of the full report.

"The interviews revealed that in spite of a media narrative that focuses on Muslim youth as alienated from Canada, our interviewees feel a deep and positive attachment toward Canada and are willing and interested in engaging in the political community," says Nesbitt-Larking. "It is important for government and community leadership, the media, and citizens to acknowledge, affirm, celebrate, and foster such attachment, as it will set in place a virtuous cycle of encounter, opportunity, joint agency, and political achievement among young Muslims as well as between them and the wider political community."

"The youth's attachment to Canada is, however, fragile," adds Bullock, "as many feel that with security certificates, the treatment of Omar Khadr by the federal government, and worries over racial profiling, that Muslims are being treated as second-class citizens in their own country."

Dr Paul spoke at the project launch, which was part of the Olive Tree Foundation's annual Gala dinner. Also previewed at the gala dinner were two short films, part of TTI's *Neglected Voices* project. *NV*, also sponsored by The Olive Tree Foundation and co-sponsored by MENTORS, is a collection of four short "point of view" films focusing on Muslim youth. The youth, two male and two female, speak of their experiences and challenges as young Muslims in Canada. Produced and directed by Jawad Jafry, who was also the producer of our mosqueone.com project of Toronto's first mosque.

Once again we welcomed three interns over the summer: Sanaa Ali-Mohamed, her sister Sumayyah and Trina Ahmed, who worked on research related to the political participation and NV projects. They were trained to conduct interviews, and conducted four follow-up interviews.